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SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AMORIM REAFFIRMS GOB  
SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELA'S MERCOSUR ACCESSION

REF: A. CARACAS 1518

[1](#)B. BRASILIA 1865

This message is Sensitive but Unclassified, please treat accordingly.

[1](#)1. (SBU) According to local media, on September 29, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim met with President Chavez and Foreign Minister Maduro in Caracas to discuss, inter alia, Venezuela's Mercosur accession, the status of the South American gas pipeline project, and bilateral cooperation in tourism, health, agriculture, the communal economy, and trade. The two sides also stressed the importance of the Bank of the South and South American integration, and talked about plans for the creation of two jointly-owned refineries located in Abreu de Lima, in Northeast Brazil, and the other in Venezuela's petroleum-rich Orinoco belt. The visit was billed as a follow up to the September 20 Lula-Chavez meeting in Manaus, Brazil.

[1](#)2. (SBU) During a post-meeting press conference, Amorim expressed the GoB's strong support for Venezuela's Mercosur accession, explaining, "the accession of Venezuela is very important, it will help us create the backbone for the integration of South America, and this has always been our vision." On the Brazilian Congress-Chavez spat (Reftel A), Amorim explained, "the Brazilian Congress has the autonomy to make its own decisions, but the government of President Lula was confident that it would decide in favor of Brazil, the integration of Latin American, and also Venezuela." (Note: Chavez has sometimes publicly blamed the USG for the delay in Venezuela's Mercosur accession. End Note.) During his September 30 weekly "Alo Presidente" television program, Chavez also announced that he would meet with Lula in either October or November to discuss generic drug manufacturing and the production of HIV/AIDS drugs.

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